

Travel Daily First with the news

Expedia agent relief

EXPEDIA TAAP has opened up package travel rates to all of its travel agency partners, with exclusive pricing for hotel and air ticket deals now available.

Previously only silver and above levels of the Expedia Travel Agent Affiliate Program could access the discounts which amount to around 20%.

Now all tiers will be included in the scheme, while existing membership levels are also being maintained throughout 2021 as a way of giving travel agents a chance to recover as travel demand returns.

Expedia TAAP's local director, Stuart Udy, said the expansion of the package rate offer was focused on bringing customers back into travel agent doors.

"Expedia TAAP has fantastic local inventory from Broome to Hobart," Udy added, with the deals giving all agencies highly competitive rates to offer their clients outstanding deals.

Scams hit \$128m grant scheme

EXCLUSIVE

THERE is yet another twist in the saga surrounding the Government's controversial \$128 million Consumer Travel Support grants program for travel agents, with warnings yesterday of "phishing attacks and other scams" regarding the scheme.

An update on the grants website highlights reports of "calls, emails or voicemail messages to travel agents saying that they are being pursued for fraud by Services Australia or Austrade".

Services Australia is urging anyone with suspicions they have been targeted to contact its Scams and Identity Theft Helpdesk on 1800 941 126.

"Never provide your user credentials or personal details and never click on a link to see where it goes," the update warns.

It's unclear at this stage whether any money has actually been defrauded from the program. **MEANWHILE** the update also provides more info on the scheme for agents who have not met one or more of the eligibility criteria.

"You should lodge an application with Services Australia in the first instance, and provide additional information requesting your claim to be considered under the exceptional circumstances provision of the Program Grant Guidelines...this will be referred by Services Australia to Austrade for advice," the FAQ advises.

It's understood that positive discussions are underway around those who missed out on the larger payments because of the way they reported their sales.

Yesterday Tourism Minister Dan Tehan confirmed about half of the grant money had already been paid out, but it's believed any funds left over once the process is finalised could be made available to redress some of the inconsistencies.

www.traveldaily.com.au Friday 5th February 2021

JQ lifts agent fares

JETSTAR has today announced changes to the fare structure on sales channels used by travel agents, making them even less competitive with the carrier's direct website.

Effective from 15 Feb, Starter Fares through the Jetstar Agent Hub, GSAs, GDS and the Jetstar API will increase by \$5, bringing offline travel agent fares in line with levels provided to OTAs for about two years.

"Unlike jetstar.com, some booking sites and platforms don't allow agents to book Jetstar's full range of products, bundles and services, which impact sales," a spokesperson told **Travel Daily**.

"This fare increase will partly help us offset this opportunity cost," the carrier added.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has seven pages of news including our PUZZLE page.

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EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

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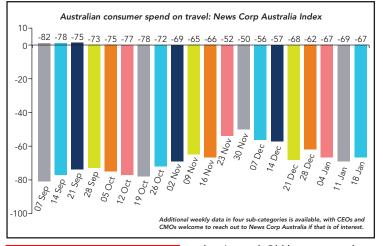


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Brief spend relief before a dip



EXCLUSIVE

THE Australia Day weekend provided a small improvement in consumer travel spend, according to News Corp Australia's latest consumer travel spending data.

The period (**pictured**) also saw states lift restrictions on travellers from Brisbane, providing a boost to airline bookings for people arriving in and departing the city.

However News Corp Australia Head of Travel Dwayne Birtles warned the travel industry not to crack the champagne, with the figures showing just a 2% improvement on the prior week, and spend still down 67%.

"This demonstrates the nervousness of some consumers who have had travel plans impacted," Birtles said.

Next week's figures are likely to reflect another uptick because they coincide with the lifting of

the six-week Qld ban on people from Greater Sydney - but then the Western Australian snap lockdown provided "another unwelcome reminder to all Australians that there is no certainty when travelling interstate and it's a constant risk that travel plans can be impacted with little notice".

IHG fresh new feel

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group is no more, replaced instead with IHG Hotels & Resorts as part of a brand refresh.

The hotelier has also revamped its logo and colours to be more appealing & has also renamed its loyalty program from IHG Rewards Club to IHG Rewards. Its 16 brands have also been split across four categories; Luxury and Lifestyle, Premium, Essentials and Suites.



Meet NT tourism operators and win great prizes! Starts 16 February, spaces are limited! Register now at tourismnt.com.au/trade/showcase



Murphy gives hope

SECRETARY of the Department of Health Brendan Murphy has suggested there are early signs the AstraZeneca vaccine, which starts to roll out in Australia at the end of the month, may help stop the transmission of COVID.

Speaking yesterday, Murphy alluded to "yet unpublished information" from the UK which showed a reduction in the virus being spread among those who have been vaccinated.

If accurate, it would have positive implications for travel because as PM Scott Morrison has indicated several times this month, international borders would open "sooner" if vaccines are able to disrupt transmission.

Get learning guvna

DESTINATION Webinars has partnered with VisitBritain to launch a new mini-series exclusively targeting travel agents in Australia and New Zealand.

Advisors who watch all four instalments can also take a quiz before 28 Feb to win one of three prize packs - start watching the new series by **CLICKING HERE**. Catch up on the February issue of *travelBulletin*, with stories on the vaccine debate, government grants and more.

CLICK to read

traveBulletin



AUSTRALIA'S tough border stance has resulted in many hard luck stories, but they're not all tinged with sadness.

Just take Indian national Govind Bhardwaj who was recently granted an exemption to enter the country to marry the love of his life, Brisbanebased Ruth Ryan.

The loved-up duo first met while Ryan was on a holiday to New Delhi, with Bhardwaj stating it "was love at first sight" when they met by chance.

After his tourist visa was rejected twice, the wannabe groom made plans to marry in Bali instead, an idea that was canned when borders closed.

But two weeks in quarantine later the couple was finally able to say "I do"- naaaaaaaw.





NORTHERN FERRITORY



Helloworld targeted by ALP

THE Federal Opposition has slammed Helloworld Travel Limited (HLO) for asking staff to take pay cuts to help ride out the coronavirus pandemic, with a confidential letter revealed in Parliament yesterday written by HLO GM of Human Resources, Alex Trifonodis.

Rumours have been swirling around the industry all this week about the move, with Helloworld apparently asking staff to consider temporary proposed changes to remuneration.

The example cited relates to an employee currently under a JobKeeper directive reduced rate of \$30,395 annually plus super, in place until 28 Mar 2021.

The staffer's pre-COVID base yearly salary was \$75,987, and the proposal is to adjust this down to \$60,000 full time for the remainder of the calendar year.

"The adjustment to your remuneration is based on the forecast revenue of the business and the actions needing to be made to protect our business," Trifonodis wrote, with staff who wish to accept the proposed change asked to confirm by signing a copy of the letter.

The Australian Services Union claims that Helloworld's failure to consult with it before rolling out the proposal was "likely a breach of enterprise agreement provisions," with ALP deputy leader Richard Marles linking the issue to unrelated proposed Government legislation currently on Parliament's agenda.

SITA Health Protect

AVIATION technology specialist SITA has launched a new Health Protect platform, providing a secure way for airlines to share health information during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The system integrates with multiple travel pass schemes and incorporates Advanced Passenger Processing to facilitate decision making at check-in. However a number of *Travel Daily* readers have commented that the Labor Party's attack on the travel sector may be seen as somewhat confused, given the claims by some of its MPs to understand the travails that the industry is going through (see **P7**).

An employment specialist lawyer contacted by **TD** noted that in the absence of JobKeeper payments and associated temporary flexibilities post 28 Mar, options include negotiating with employees, and that any changes to employment terms and conditions must be "mutually agreed and should be recorded in writing, ideally with a specified timeframe".

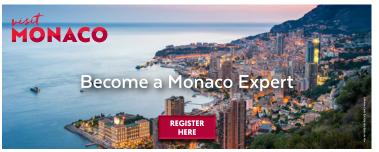
If the existing workforce cannot be sustained, "consideration should be given to what roles are necessary and whether there are roles that are no longer required resulting in redundancy," the lawyer said, while other options include continued Stand Down orders under section 524 of the Fair Work Act, only permitted due to a complete stoppage of work.

Yumm, it's Mumm!

SEALINK Travel Group has announced the debut of the new Mumm Harbour Bar, serving G.H. Mumm French Champagne on the recently refurbished Ocean Deck of Captain Cook Cruises' *Sydney 2000* harbour ship.

Kicking off at 3pm each afternoon from Fri 12 Feb, each guest will receive 1.5 hours service of Mumm Grand Cordon Champagne, traditionally a cellar door-only tipple only served in Sydney's top restaurants & bars.

The bubbles will be paired with a High Tea-style seafood platter to share, with Captain Cook Cruises GM Anthony Haworth saying Sydneysiders and interstate visitors alike were looking for new experiences in the shadow of an "extremely difficult 2020". Launch prices start at \$89 per person - 02 9206 1111.



Quick, it's a Quark agency visit!



"IT'S been a long time between drinks walking into a full shop of smiling agents eager to learn about Quark Expeditions," according to Jarrod Zurvas, the cruise line's Director of Sales Asia Pacific.

However that's just what he managed this week when he called in on Travel Associates in Norwood, Adelaide, with the visit also helping celebrate the

Time to talk on Tue

VISIT Utah is gearing up to host its Talk it Tuesday webinar on 16 Feb, providing agents with an indepth look at the town of Logan.

Hosted alongside Julie Hollist Terrill from the town's destination management organisation, one lucky webinar participant will win an Explore Logan gift pack.

Known for its outdoor adventures, strong heritage and performing arts, Logan is a popular stopover on trips to Bear Lake State Park, Yellowstone National Park and the Tetons.

While in Logan, travellers can sample the city's art galleries, specialty shops, community festivals, and local food.

Logan also is the location of the main campus of Utah State University, where travellers can find early Mormon architecture such as the Old Main building. The Logan webinar takes place

The Logan webinar takes place 10am AEDT - Register **HERE**. addition of the entire Travel Associates network across Australia to the Virtuoso Travel family (*TD* 04 Dec).

Zurvas is **pictured** along with Krystal Savage, Gretta Henderson, Danica Scott and Magda Kordysz.

Norfolk Island debuts new site

NORFOLK Island Tourism has just launched a new website featuring fresh images, content, videos, blog stories and links to tours, activities, accommodation and car hire.

The website is still located at www.norfolkisland.com.au.

Scenic showcases

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has announced it will be debuting its exciting new Virtual Travel Showcase from next week.

Supporting travellers to plan and book their next cruise or land journey through a travel advisor, Scenic will showcase its range of all-inclusive luxury river and ocean cruises and handcrafted land journeys via a program of presentations from next Wed, rolling through to Mar.

Hosted by the Scenic sales team, the sessions have been designed to provide insider travel knowledge to help plan a journey.

See the full list of times and sessions on offer **HERE**.

Travel Daily CORPORATE UPDATE **Recovery by 2025: GBTA**

THE business travel sector needs at least four more years to fully recover from the damage caused by the global pandemic, GBTA's annual Business Travel Index has revealed.

Despite GBTA Research Director Chris Ely labelling 2021 a "year of survival", the report is projecting 21% growth in global business travel volumes for the remainder of the year, followed by an estimated 38% increase for 2022, setting the flagging industry up for a generous global rebound in spend to US\$1.2 trillion.

"Business travel is a key component of the economy, so as businesses are looking to dig themselves out and pursue new clients, that's when business travel kicks in," Ely said.

The study predicted businesses would focus initially on sales

BCD ups excellence

BCD Travel has launched a new Centre of Excellence to address the specific needs and complex issues facing the "life science" travel sector, including offering improved expertise, better technology and patient-centric programming.

Biz travel greener?

TRAVEL management company EnPerSo Business Travel has announced a new seed funding round to facilitate its goal of making 1,000 travel programs 100% carbon neutral by 2025.

"Some people may not believe it's a great time to invest in the travel industry, others see it as an enormous opportunity - clearly we are in the latter," said cofounder Jess Richards.

"Further investment now will allow us to capitalise in a disrupted market and turn travel programs carbon neutral."

EnPerSo's booking platform allows users to view their environmental impact of travel bookings in real time.

travel in the early part of this year, with service and repair travel missions to existing customers the next priority.

Training and supplier meetings are tipped to be given the least attention given the virtual tech alternatives such as Zoom are thriving among businesses, while internal meetings were flagged to take precedence above external conferences and trade shows.

The study also showed global travel volumes plummeted by more than half during 2020 when compared to 2019 levels, equating the health crisis to be roughly 10 times worse than the effect of 9/11 on corporate travel.

Threat level 2020

FCM Travel has outlined how effective its Travel Risk Management Tool has been for clients during the pandemic in 2020, delivering more than 15,000 travel alerts - including 10 emergency notifications.

Helping travel planners avoid being caught up in emergencies, the tool alerted customers to more than 40 commercial airline failures last year, as well as a range of snap border restrictions which often came into force at very little notice.

"2020 brought with it an important message: that through our people, our products, and our relationships, FCM remains by the side of our customers," the company said.

TripActions appoints

MATHEW Hosking has been appointed to the position of Director of Sales, APAC for corporate travel and payment platform TripActions.

Prior to joining the company, Hosking was the Senior Sales Director - Global Accounts for WeWork in New York for close to four years, where he was charged with managing the company's top 20 global clients.



Travel Daily How many islands make up

Singapore?

ead to the Travel Daily Training Academy to find e answer and learn more about this and other estinations

TNZ: face-to-face is essential



A NEW documentary commissioned by Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) shows meeting inperson beats virtual meetings for creativity and productivity.

Tourism New Zealand worked with local psychologist & author Nigel Latta (pictured) on How We Work, which found businesses would benefit from giving the computer screens a break in exchange for meetings in-person.

How We Work captured a social experiment involving eight businesspeople from the country, who connected online first and completed a series of activities and exercises together, plagued by all of the usual online-related blips, such as ill-timed muted microphones, canine distractions and connection issues.

The group then gathered inperson at Kauri Bay Boomrock

on the outskirts of Auckland, rolling out the same exercises and comparing results.

"We asked, are there good things that can only happen where we're actually together in the same place," Latta posed, adding "we found that it is possible to do business and collaborate online, you can certainly get stuff done in spite of dogs, mute buttons and awkward etiquette."

But TNZ General Manager Domestic & Business Events Bjoern Spreitzer reinforced the research showed meeting inperson had better outcomes.

"With many businesses finding themselves planning for future recovery meeting in person could help them find more innovative and creative solutions," he said. Watch How We Work HERE.



* Famil includes an amazing experience on The Ghan. Terms and conditi





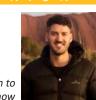
Travel Daily

Friday 5th February 2021

Let us lean into the calm before the storm

Andrew Buerckner is the Director at Platinum Travel Corporation. Got an opinion to

com.au.



share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.

IT HAS been six months since my last article reflecting on updates to the JobKeeper program; six months since the last real injection of hope for the travel industry. My reflections since then have been guieter and more inward, as we've focused on the mental health and wellbeing of Platinum staff, and done everything we can to help them secure meaningful work to supplement the incredible job they do for Platinum's clients.

What I want to reflect on is not the dire reality our industry faces come 28 Mar, but on how far we've come in the fight against COVID since JobKeeper 2.0 was announced. While it's easy to lean into the idea that 'we still have no revenue', we can't afford to ignore the clear and present reality that there is an end in sight. We just need continued support to get there.

The Big V: The introduction of a COVID vaccine has remained the travel industry's greatest chance of recovery since day one.

The fact that numerous vaccines with efficacies up to 94% have been developed, and will be rolled out, before the end of 2021 is nothing short of remarkable.

It's important we focus on the progress this represents for our industry and not dwell too much on the critics who oppose them.

Because while everyone can, and should, have a choice about whether to receive a vaccination, it's the increasing likelihood of it becoming a requirement of air travellers that will make a tangible difference for travel.

There have also been significant

developments in the rollout and use of instant/spot testing for COVID-19; designed for airports and other high-traffic areas. Assuming they're used in conjunction with vaccines, the combined mitigation of risk bodes similarly well for the travel sector.

The Real Case for 'TravelKeeper': Before I restate my case on the need for an industry-specific wage subsidy post JobKeeper, I want to reiterate a point l've made every step of the way: we are so damn lucky to have received the support we

have to date. JobKeeper has undoubtedly been a lifeline for our industry, and we can't afford to forget how lucky we are, as Australians, to have been on the other end of it these past 10 months. I want to make

special mention here of those organisations who've elected to hand back their JobKeeper payments in light of positive financial results, and to those who've publicly highlighted the need to redirect these funds to the pandemic's hardest-hit industries. I'm humbled and thankful for their support.

Many of you will know by now, too, about some of the other federal grants available to travel agencies. Unfortunately, you'll also know that most agencies - like ours - are ineligible to access this support thanks to a technicality the govt is yet to readdress. All the same, I don't envisage any one grant or business support payment being able to act as more than a band-aid for business overheads, or being one that could ever outweigh the benefit of an

extended salary supplement. Keeping the lights on and creditors at bay is one thing, but protecting the experience and expertise of a highly-skilled workforce is guite another.

Think, for a moment, about what would happen if the government imposed similar restrictions on the building industry. And I don't mean temporarily, either. I mean for two years. No building. No renovations. Nothing. Then imagine what would happen when those restrictions were

> lifted; assuming the government left the industry with no support along the way. How would homeowners not to mention local councils - feel about a gaggle of firstyear apprentices building their first homes or second storeys with only Youtube as their

guide? It might sound like a clunky example, but it highlights the fact that our industries are our people. And how can we expect an industry's talent and expertise to remain at our disposal if we force them to cease operating for years at a time? I mean, God help the poor bastard who has to live in any of the houses I've renovated over the years. And a friendly reminder there are those who've made the grossly ill-informed mistake of underestimating travel agents and travel management companies: those who've suggested it's time we acknowledged our fate, moved on to other industries and accept that 'people book their travel online now, anyway.'

Well, I want to take a moment to remind these people that our situation is not comparable to that of taxis, Kodak or

Blockbuster. We are not being challenged by innovation or alternative services. The travel and tourism industry (+9.9%) has outgrown general retail (+9.5%) in Australia over the last 10 years, and contributes tens of billions to the Australian economy annually.

Platinum itself has grown no less than 25% year-on-year for the last three years. In short? We're thriving! Or we were, until a global pandemic necessitated government-imposed travel restrictions to protect the health and safety of Australians. And the real irony here is the vast majority of my colleagues understand and support these restrictions. Public health should come first. We're simply suggesting the industry that was first, hardest, and that will be longest hit should not have to pay the ultimate price. And nor should consumers. Because it won't just be travel industry staff who pay this price. The cost to consumers if airlines and agents fail - if competition evaporates and capacity plummets - might be hard to predict, but not to imagine.

The Crux of It: Countless industries and local economies rely on the health and success of the travel and tourism industry. It employs tens of thousands

of people and contributes more than 3% to our annual GDP.

And, thanks to some fierce and relentless industry advocates, this message is getting through.

Only time will tell what, if any, real support the travel industry is offered after 28 Mar but as hard as we've all been working to remind our local members and politicians of the value we represent - to respectfully campaign the 'right' way, and through the 'appropriate' channels - it's about time we reminded ourselves. We have worth, we have value, and we have an integral role to play in what will be the biggest economic recovery in our nation's history.

We can't afford to ignore the clear and present reality that there is an end in sight

66



Icon under a microscope



THIS landmark is iconic and easily recognisable when you see the whole picture, but can you identify it from this small portion of the image?

The Hell Gate Bridge in New York inspired the final design of this structure.

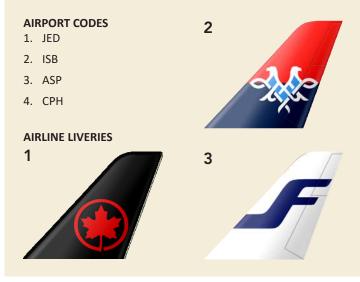
Originally the pylons, **pictured** above, were purely built for their aesthetic value and were added so people wouldn't be concerned about the structural integrity of this icon.

Test your knowledge

FOR travel, flying is a key part of our industry, and it's also full of symbols and acronyms.

Agents have to know airport codes, airline codes, airline liveries and more.

How well do you know the aviation industry? Do you know what airports these codes stand for, and what plane liveries are pictured?



NEED A DISTRACTION AMID THE DOOM AND GLOOM?



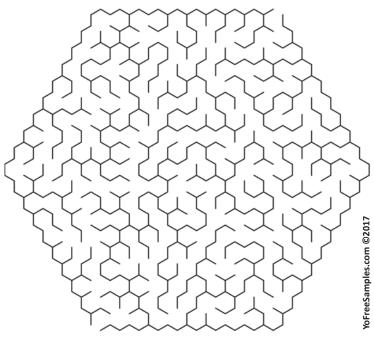
Check out our daily puzzle page.

Pub quiz

- 1. In what city can you find the Taj Mahal?
- 2. Name any of the eight cities that most prominently lay claim to the title "the Paris of the West"?
- 3. Maria Island is located off the coast of which Australian state?
- 4. The Avon River flows through what city?
- 5. Both Fullerton hotels, in Singapore and Sydney, are constructed in buildings that formerly housed what?
- 6. The Istana Negara is the official residence of what country's monarch?
 - a) Malaysia
 - b) Japan
 - c) Saudi Arabia
- 7. Rome-Fiumicino International Airport is named after who?
- 8. What is the most populous city within the European Union?
- 9. In what year did Vancouver host the Winter Olympics?
- 10. What initially opened in 1994 on the north bank of the Yarra River, before relocating to the south bank three years later?

A-maze-ing

CAN you find your way through this maze? Start at the top right corner and finish in the bottom left.



ANSWERS 04 FEB

Whose flag is this: British Virgin Islands Know your brands: 1 Gmail, 2 Origin Energy, 3 Aussie Broadband, 4 Fiji Airways Whose animal is this: Keel-billed toucan - Belize

Travel Daily e info@traveldaily.com.au



Phuket: we'll do this without you

POPULAR Aussie travel haunt Phuket has revealed bold plans to revive its failing tourism economy, announcing it will privately fund a vaccination drive without waiting for the Thailand Government.

The Phuket Chamber of Commerce and the Phuket Tourist Association have suggested they would pool funds to get 70% of its residents over the age of 18 immunised, expediting the date for when the island can safely reopen to international tourism.

If it gets approved by the Thai Govt, it would mean removing any mandated quarantine period.

MEANWHILE, Thailand has cut its 2021 tourism forecast from 10 million arrivals to just five million, due to global spikes of COVID.

Shorten pushes PM

SHADOW Minister for Government Services, Bill Shorten, was on the attack in parliament again this week, advancing the case for a renewed support package for travel agents.

Shorten lashed the government for not yet committing to a package, suggesting PM Scott Morrison had "unfinished business" when it came to travel agent support.

"No amount of soothing words can replace the need for action," he argued, adding that hope for a recovery on the back of domestic travel had been dashed by ongoing border closures.

"Please, do not stop JobKeeper on 31 Mar, travel agents and their employees in the broader tourism sector are not out of the woods," Shorten pleaded.

TRAVEL SPECIALS

WELCOME to Travel Specials, *Travel Daily*'s Friday

feature. If your firm has released a travel special you'd like to make the industry aware of, send the details to specials@traveldaily.com.au

Savings of up to \$181 are available for last-minute walk-on fares with the **Spirit of Tasmania**. Travel without a vehicle on selected sailings between o1 Mar and 11 Mar, with both day and night sailings available from \$119 - a saving of \$131 for the former and \$181 for the latter - **CLICK HERE**.

Western Australia's **Rendezvous Hotel Perth Scarborough** is offering a Valentine's Day package providing romantic dining by the sea. Valid for 14 Feb, the deal includes a four-course dinner with views over the Indian Ocean from the hotel's signature restaurant Straits Cafe - **CLICK HERE**.

Book a range of itineraries with **Wendy Wu Tours**, with special single supplement offers providing savings of up to \$3,990. Valid for a selection of journeys in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, South America, and more, the offer was recently extended until the end of Feb. For the full range of tours included in the special, call 1300 727 998 for details.

Celestyal Cruises has launched a series of seven-day flash sales. Varying in value, deals start from \$949 per person, based on double occupancy. The offers are available on qualifying 2021 seven-night cruises - **HERE**.



Mantra Gladstone opens



GLADSTONE has welcomed a new Mantra hotel which opened this week in the Queensland city's downtown area.

Mantra Gladstone, formerly a Mercure, has undergone a number of upgrades and enhancements as part of the rebrand, including the transformation of 33 of its 60 guestrooms into spacious, openplan, self-contained apartments,

Dest NSW strategy

FOLLOWING the launch of the Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 (*TD* 18 Jan), a creative pitch is currently being undertaken by Destination NSW.

A spokesperson for the DMO told *Mumbrella* the account review is motivated by a need to develop a compelling destination brand for Sydney and New South Wales, one of the key pillars of delivery for the Strategy. aimed at holidaying couples and corporate travellers.

The hotel is located on O'Connell Street, adjoining the Yaralla Sports Club, and features a fitness centre, food & beverage options, and a soon-to-beopened swimming pool.

To celebrate the launch, Mantra Gladstone is offering overnight stays from \$120 per night in a hotel room and rates from \$135 per night for one of the hotel's refurbished apartment rooms.

Skyrail clarification

TRAVEL Daily would like to clarify that the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway is only reducing its hours of operation to weekends only for the month of Feb, not for the next few months as was reported on Wed (**TD** 03 Feb).

In Mar, the company will open from Thu to Sun, and most days in Apr - see full schedule **HERE**.

Got a confidential tip? Contact Travel Daily via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click HERE Travel Daily



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